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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WOMAN FOUND GUILTY OF LYING TO FEDERAL AGENTS IN DOUBLE HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION

PHOENIX – Mecheryl Begay, 23, of Lower Greasewood, Ariz., was found guilty by a federal jury on May 23 of lying to the FBI and a grand jury about her whereabouts in the course of an investigation into a double homicide in 2002. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Fredrick J. Martone from May 15 to May 22. Sentencing is set before Judge Martone on September 10.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Daniel Knauss stated: "This verdict is a victory for the truth. The truthful testimony and cooperation of witnesses is vital to the pursuit of justice. When witnesses lie to federal agents or the courts, it only makes the pursuit of justice on behalf of victims like these two young students, who cannot now speak for themselves, that much more difficult."

The evidence at trial showed that the defendant lied to FBI agents and to the grand jury about her whereabouts on the night of March 27 and early morning hours of March 28, 2002. The defendant claimed to both the FBI and grand jury that she had been home asleep on that night. The evidence at trial showed that the defendant had been at a party with several other individuals and that, after the party, had driven around the Greasewood area. The evidence further showed that the defendant and her group met up with two Ganado High School students just a short time before the two students were shot and killed. The defendant lied to the FBI about her whereabouts on March 28, 2002, just hours after the victims were found. The jury found she lied to the grand jury during her testimony two years later. The defendant's brother, Kendrick Begay, was charged in June 2006 with the murders and is awaiting trial.

A conviction for perjury and false statements carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Martone will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which was aided by the Navajo Department of Public Safety, Criminal Investigations.

The prosecution was handled by Ann Birmingham Scheel and Kimberly Hare, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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